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LOCAL NEWS

Authors share stories about historic churches



Nellie Doneva/Reporter-News Pixie and Carl Christensen, authors of "Lone Star Steeples: Historic Places of Worship in Texas," speak on the first day of the West Texas Book Festival.

By Dan Carpenter, Special to the Reporter-News

Updated: Yesterday 7:08 p.m.

Carl and Pixie Christensen started with a list of more than 600 historic churches, before narrowing it down to 65 that made the final cut in their new book, "Lone Star Steeples: Historic Places of Worship in Texas."

The Christensens, of Llano, kicked off the first Lunch at the Library program Monday as part of the 16th annual West Texas

Book Festival.

"Based on historical markers, the character of the church and the architectural detail, we were able to narrow the list from 600 to 200 extremely impressive churches," said Carl Christensen. "From there, we chose 65 to be in this book, and ended up with enough for a second and third edition."

"Lone Star Steeples" captures the historically significant structures in watercolor illustrations — painted by Carl Christensen, a design architect — along with brief summaries of each church.

"The journey behind 'Lone Star Steeples' crisscrossed the state along back roads, farm roads, and state highways," said Pixie Christensen. "In these journeys and in the stories that were told, certain patterns began to emerge — most notably, the people's recognition of the church as their cultural foundation, their moral foundation and their social center."

Glenn Dromgoole, owner of Texas Star Trading Co. and chairman of the book festival, said the festival aims to accomplish several things, among them attracting and recognizing authors, publishers and readers from around Texas.

"This event, which is presented by the Friends of the Abilene Public Library, also recognizes local and area authors," Dromgoole said. "We also want to increase awareness and support for library programs, and raise funds to benefit the library."

Carl Christensen told the audience gathered for lunch Monday that the churches in their book "range from stately edifices of brick and stone located in urban centers to more humble wood-frame chapels in rural surroundings. The houses of faith shown in these pages have one important trait in common: they have all served as centers of cultural identity, spiritual comfort, and public service to

the communities in which they arose."

If you go

What: West Texas Book Festival

When: Through Saturday

Tuesday's events

Lunch at the Library: Featuring Glen Sample Ely, author of "The Texas Frontier & the Butterfield Overland Mail, 1858-1861," noon at the downtown library. Free. Lunch available for \$5

Abilene Author Showcase: Featuring local authors who have had books published in the last year, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the downtown library. Books available for sale.

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